

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
ACDA-12 TRSE-00 /078 W
-----063542 210728Z /21

R 210655Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3036
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR

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E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: PFOR, TU, UR
SUBJ: TURKISH MINISTER OF STATE VISIT TO SOVIET UNION

1. AUGUST 17 "MILLIYET" REPORTS THAT TURKISH MNISTRY OF STATE FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND FOUNDATIONS, LUTFI DOGAN (RPP) WILL VISIT TASHKENT AND BOKHARRA IN THE LAST DAYS OF RAMAZAN (EARLY SEPTEMBER) 1978 AT THE INVITATION OF SOVIET MUSLIM SPIRITUAL LEADER, BABAHANOV. (LUTFI DOGAN IS A 60 YEAR OLD CLERGYMAN WITH THE REPUTATION OF MAINTAINING A MODERATE STANCE ON RELIGION AND POLITICS. HE WAS ELECTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN JUNE 1977 ON THE RPP TICKET FOR MALATYA.)

2. IN A MEETING WITH THE PRESS, DOGAN STATED THAT SUCH CONTACTS WERE USEFUL, CITING THAT THE VISIT OF SAUDI ARABIA'S MINISTER OF PIOUS FOUNDATIONS BECAME THE FORUM FOR AN AGREEMENT FOR TURKS TO BUILD MOSQUES IN SAUDI ARABIA WHICH IS EXPECTED TO EARN TURKEY 1.5 BILLION
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LIRA IN HARD CURRENCY.

3. WORD OF THE TRIP DREW CRITICISM FROM CONSERVATIVE "HERGUN," AUGUST 18. THE COLUMNIST CITED THE PAST AND PRESENT PERSECUTION OF FOLLOWERS OF ISLAM IN THE SOVIET UNION AND ALLEGED THAT BABAHANOV, IN HIS CAPACITY AS HEAD OF A RELIGIOUS ADMINISTRATION SET UP BY THE

SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE ANTI-RELIGIOUS VIEWS,
PERSONALLY ASSISTS IN THE REGIME'S ATHEISTIC PROPAGANDA
EFFORTS. DOGAN WAS CAUTIONED TO EXPECT A WELL-REHEARSED
PROPAGANDA SHOW BUT IF HE WANTS THE TRUTH HE SHOULD
ATTEMPT TO PRAY AND MINGLE WITH THE PEOPLE DURING HIS
VISIT.

4. COMMENT: THE SIGNIFICANCE TO DOGAN'S VISIT IS THAT
IT REPRESENTS ANOTHER OF THE "ACROSS THE BOARD" CONTACTS
BETWEEN THE TURKS AND SOVIETS. WE UNDERSTAND IT MAY BE THE
FIRST VISIT BY A TURKISH CLERGYMAN TO THE SOVIET UNION.
DILLON

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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